

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS LILONGWE 000166

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [MI](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES DECLARED; OPPOSITION BADLY DIVIDED

REF: A. 03 LILONGWE 1202

[B.](#) LILONGWE 123

[¶1.](#) (U) Six presidential contenders declared their candidacy to the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) on February 25 and [¶26.](#) Among them were the United Democratic Front (UDF)/Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) coalition's Bingu wa Mutharika, four from opposition parties, and one independent.

COMMENT

[¶2.](#) (SBU) Vice President (and former UDF heavyweight) Justin Malewezi's last minute decision to break away from the Mgirizano Coalition and contest as an independent presidential candidate typifies the increasing divisions in the opposition (septel). With five candidates splitting the opposition vote, the UDF/AFORD coalition is well positioned to win with a plurality, reminiscent of the 2001 Zambian elections. With three months left before polling day, the opposition's factionalization makes the UDF/AFORD coalition the clear front-runner.

[¶3.](#) (U) Official presidential candidates and running mates as declared to the MEC are as follows:

United Democratic Front/Alliance for Democracy

Presidential Candidate: Bingu wa Mutharika
Running Mate: Cassim Chilumpha
(Note: Several minor parties, including the Congress for National Unity, Malawi Democratic Union, and New Dawn for Africa, have reportedly announced their support for the UDF/AFORD coalition.)

Mgwirizano Coalition

Presidential Candidate: Gwanda Chakuamba
Running Mate: Aleke Banda
(Note: The Mgirizano Coalition comprises the Republican Party, People's Progressive Movement, Movement for Democratic Change, National Unity Party, Malawi Forum for Unity and Development, People's Transformation Party, and Malawi Democratic Party.)

National Democratic Alliance (NDA)

Presidential Candidate: Brown James Mpinganjira
Running Mate: Clara Makungwa

Malawi Congress Party (MCP)

Presidential Candidate: John Zenasi Ungapake Tembo
Running Mate: Peter Chiwona

New Congress for Democracy (NCD)

Presidential Candidate: Hetherwick Maurice Ntaba
Running Mate: Moses John Chikoko

Independent

Presidential Candidate: Justin Chimera Malewezi
Running Mate: Jimmy Hastings Koreia-Mpatsa
BROWNING